

Mr. Buckminster's

Sermon

A T

The ORDINATION

O F

Mr. Ebenezer Sparhawk.



*Ministers to be pray'd for, in their
Office, by the People, &c. &c.*

A
S e r m o n

PREACHED AT
The O R D I N A T I O N
Of The Reverend
Mr. *Ebenezer Sparhawk,*
TO THE
P A S T O R A L C A R E
OF THE
CHURCH and CONGREGATION
I N
Narraganset, Number 6, since called
T E M P L E T O W N ;
Nov. 18. 1761.

B Y
JOSEPH BUCKMINSTER, *A. M.*
Pastor of the Church of ~~CHRIST~~ in *Ratland*.

B O S T O N :

*Printed by Benjamin Mecom, at the New Print-
ing-Office, near the TOWN-HOUSE. 1762.*

Advertisement.

TO the venerable ecclesiastical Council and Christian People of Narraganset, No. 6, now Templetown, with other Gentlemen and Friends, who encouraged the following Publication, it is now most humbly inscribed, by their Servant



The AUTHOR.

N. B. *If any who give themselves the trouble of casting an eye upon the following sermon, shall consider it as a faulty omission, that the blessing of God, to attend and succeed a minister's labours, is no more insisted on; and that the special grace of God is not so much as explicitly mentioned, ----- I would answer: --- As to the first, it is supposed in every passage; and as to the other, it is implied under the head of faithfulness; which no minister, no, nor any man, can attain to in the proper acceptation of the word, without a principle of grace residing in, actuating and influencing of him.*

II THESS. iii. 1.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you.

EXcellent commendation this, to be bestowed upon any people whatsoever ! that the progress and flourishing of Christ's kingdom and interest among them, should be made the rule and measure of their prayers and addresses to God for its progress and flourishing in other places. Religion, in such a case, must certainly thrive in the power and purity of it. It must spread itself over the hearts and lives of men ; and be in them a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. It must rise higher and higher, in a manner resembling the waters in Ezekiel's vision, first to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, and then a river ; waters to swim in ; a river that could not be passed over. But where shall such a people be found ! in what happy corner of the earth do they dwell ! exempt, removed from that degeneracy and corruption, that spiritual deadness, stupidity and senselessness, and those many crying disorders, of one kind or another, that now so dreadfully overspread the christian world ?

It

It would be a burlesque upon almost any people, at this day, and even upon religion itself through their means, to make the proposal to them, as here in the text, and say, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you.

The apostles had no particular charge, (unless the gospel of the uncircumcision being committed to one, as the gospel of the circumcision was to another, may be thought to be so) they travelled about from place to place, over all the then known world, the various provinces of the roman empire ; yea, so did they strive to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, in fulfilment of that prophecy, " To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see ; and they that have not heard shall understand."---The care not of this or that particular church only, but of all the churches came upon them. For which reason (an essential alteration in circumstances, as well as another, hinted at before, and which it will perhaps offend, more plainly to mention) with reference to ordinary, stated pastors and teachers, the particular limitation or specification, here in the text, may be either totally laid aside, or rather altered and accommodated in the following manner---Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even among you and others your fellow-creatures, your fellow-professors.

The kind compellation, brethren, shews the condescension and tenderness of the divinely inspired and authorised apostle, and teacheth us the endeared affection there ought to be mutually, between ministers & people. They should naturally care for each others state ;

state ; consider themselves as members one of another ; love as brethren ; be pitiful, be courteous ; and live in all the happy fruits and evidences of christian love ; live in peace, that the God of love and peace may be with them. It may, accordingly, carry in it, a motive to the duty itself, the duty of prayer, for their publick spiritual guides and teachers. Agreeably, the apostle, having closed the chapter preceeding, with humble and earnest addresses (to our Lord Jesus Christ, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace) on the behalf of his Thessalonians ; goes on, in the beginning of this, and in the end of his epistle, under this kind appellation, to bespeak their prayers upon his own, and the behalf of his fellow-apostles, his fellow-workers to the kingdom of Christ.

The obligations, as to prayer, between ministers and people, are reciprocal ; and whether they confess their faults one to another, yea or no ; they ought certainly to pray one for another, and to do it with importunity too. The high-priest, under the law, was to bear the names of the twelve tribes, upon the curious breast-plate, whenever he went in to appear before God ; and tho' the people were provided of no such instrument to do it upon, nor might they be permitted to have one ; yet they were doubtless, at the same time, to bear him upon their hearts. It seems but a suitable retaliation ; and such as we may reasonably hope and expect ; that, when we have prayed for our people, we should enjoy the benefit of their prayers, in return and requital.

Thus we may keep up and maintain our spiritual communion and intercourse one with the other.

We

We may interchange kind offices. And, indeed, in praying for the ministers, you do but pray for yourselves at second-hand : For “ all are yours ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas ; all are yours.” We have no gift, no accomplishment, but it is for your benefit : Therefore, brethren, pray for us.

The good, the apostle would have prayed for, in behalf of the ministers, or the request itself, is “ that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified.” In the margin it is “run and be glorified.” It is supposed to be an allusion to a water-course---when the word of God spreads and prevails ; glides sweetly and swiftly along, like some pleasant stream, washing different shores ; visiting and refreshing this and the other part of the country ; and there is nothing to oppose and hinder it, nothing that stands in its way to dam up and obstruct it ; or when, like some vast collection of waters, some mighty river, it overflows all its banks, and bears down every thing before it of the lusts and corruptions of men ; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Christ, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of faith ; plucking up, pulling down, and turning away the strong-holds of satan in the hearts of men. When it thus spreads and prevails, in the conviction and conversion of sinners, and edification of saints, building them up in their most holy faith ; --- when it reforms and sanctifies the world ; turns lions into lambs ; subdues the savage tempers and dispositions of men ; it is then glorified, and the author of it. Nothing like this to conciliate honour and esteem to it ; to raise its credit and reputation, both in the privileged persons themselves, and those

those that see and observe them, that are intimately acquainted with them ; falling down before, they will confess that God is in it of a truth. --- Therefore, brethren, pray for us, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run, have free course and be glorified, even among you and others your fellow-creatures, your fellow-professors.

What I propose further, upon the present occasion, is, by the divine leave and assistance, a little to enlarge upon the following things.

I. What a people are to pray for, in behalf of the ministers, as invited and exhorted thereto here in the text.

II. Why they should pray for them in these respects.

III. What special interest ministers have in these concerns, above christians in general, that the people should be invited to pray for the one, rather than the other, as to this matter ; --- and so come to the improvement and application.

First, then, what are the people to pray for in behalf of the ministers, as invited and exhorted thereto here in the text ?

I answer---In the general, every thing that looks with a friendly and favourable aspect upon ; or that has a direct and natural tendency (through the concurring influence and blessing of divine providence and grace) to the work of the Lord's prospering in their hands ; his word's running, having free course & being glorified ; his cause, kingdom and interest's, thriving and flourishing in the world, and in the hearts and lives of men ; the kingdom of satan being destroyed, and the kingdom of grace advanced and built up, upon the ruins of it ; and that, whether it re-

spects the good qualifications, temper and behaviour of the ministers, or themselves : Both which must coincide and concur to produce this great and important event, the word of the Lord's having free course and being glorified, in the conviction and conversion of sinners and edification of saints.

Respecting the ministers, the people are to pray, as invited and exhorted thereto, here in the text ; that they may be men of superior knowledge and understanding, of faithfulness, prudence, meekness and humility, courage and steadfastness, aptness to teach, and of an every way inoffensive, blameless, regular, and exemplary life and conversation ; making, not only the light of their doctrine, but of their behavior, shine before men ; that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our father in heaven. Each of these, if not absolutely necessary, is highly useful and beneficial to the work of the Lord's prospering in our hands ; to his word's running and being glorified where we officiate ; to our doing any considerable good, as ministers, in the world. They have a natural and direct tendency thereto ; and ought, therefore, to be humbly and earnestly sought, by the people (of him, from whom comes every good and perfect gift, who gives liberally and upbraideth not) in behalf of their ministers, as invited and exhorted thereto here in the text.

Some tolerable improvements and proficiency in knowledge and understanding (the more the better) are absolutely necessary, to render a person subjectively capable of the ministerial function. To be the teachers of others, we must be first taught ourselves. An ignorant instructor, is one of the greatest solecisms and absurdities imaginable ; it is a contradiction in terms ; and no less so in divinity, than in
any

any other art or profession whatsoever. Ministers are to be the teachers of others. This is part of their office ; it is part, and no little part ; nay, it is the principal part of the end of their institution. --- “ Go, teach all nations,” (says our divine Lord and Master) “ ye are the light of the world.” Hence they are sometimes distinguished by this name, teachers. They ought then, not meerly to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God ; and to be more than babes in understanding, (newly enlightened, if enlightened at all) they ought to be skilful in the word of life ; for if the blind lead the blind, will either be safe from falling into the ditch ? Ministers should certainly be men of knowledge ; they must be so. A very ignorant person is no true minister of Christ ; tho he may put on the garb of one ; tho he may affect to shew himself in such an one’s livery. Superior knowledge and understanding, is not only useful, but even necessary, in almost every part of their difficult business. A minister of the gospel, without considerable improvements in understanding (pardon the expression, pardon the contradiction) is like an eye without sight, (I think it is Dr. Bates his comparison) useful and serviceable, neither to himself, nor to any one else. They should, by rights, have no little insight into the original languages, * (those in which the scriptures were written) that they may drink at the fountain, where the waters are purest,

no

* Here, I would beg leave, to express my wishes (if I may do it without offence) that the Hebrew language may still rise in its reputation, among the students at our Colleges. And, for an expedient, what if certain premiums should be bestowed upon such, as are known to have made the greatest proficiency ? A wreath of straw, when proposed as a laurel of victory, how has it awakened and fired mens ambition !

no foot having defiled them ; that they may see with their own eyes, and not take every thing upon trust from others ; be led away by the error of the wicked, and stand exposed to crafty men, who lie in wait to deceive ; but that they may be capable (if need be) to contend earnestly for the faith, and to confute gainfayers. They should be, in some measure, acquainted with the liberal arts and sciences, which serve to open and enlarge the mind, and are all handmaids to divinity. But religion itself should be their principal study. The religion of the bible should be that, which above all other things, they are not ignorant of. They should be, Apollos like, men mighty in the scriptures ; and, accordingly, more than others, addict themselves to the means and methods of information ; get wisdom, and with all their gettings, get understanding. They should give attendance to reading, no less than exhortation and doctrine, (the one will render them capable of the other) neglect not the gift that is in them, which was given by prophecy ; whether with or without the laying on the hands of the presbytery ; meditate upon these things, give themselves wholly to them, that their profiting may appear unto all, or in all things. Truth should be the object of their pursuit, sacred truth ! What is truth ? should be the question they would ever decide. They should therefore lay aside, as much as may be, prepossession and prejudice ; lay their minds open to conviction ; not be carried away with an affectation of novelty and singularity, any more than shackled with authority and venerable antiquity. They should dare to embrace and adhere to unpopular truth ; as well as to renounce popular error.

And

And they should have an understanding of men, no less than of things ; know something of their various dispositions, and how access may most easily be had to them ; how they may be address'd in a manner most likely to produce the effect ; how their different tempers may be most easily control'd and directed. Chrysostom affirms " that those persons are best qualified for the pastoral charge, who to holiness of life, have joined so much worldly experience and prudence, as may enable them, in the course of their ministry, to address themselves to men, in a way suited to their several exigencies and tempers, to their various ranks and characters. Of such importance is learning and knowledge, to publick guides and teachers in religious concerns ; that even inspiration itself did not supersede the conveniency and usefulness of it. They had their colleges, of old, for the training up youth to the prophetick office ; one of which, as it seems, had the famous Elisha to its president. And our blessed Saviour, the word and wisdom of God, would not send forth his apostles, till they had first been some time under his immediate personal tuition and discipline.

Thus is some improvement in knowledge, absolutely necessary to render a person subjectively capable of the ministerial function. He cannot sustain it, he can't discharge the various duties of it, without this furniture, these qualifications. The thing is impossible. It would be like sending a message by a fool ; and wise Solomon has told us, he that does so " cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage."

Faithfulness, will dispose them to use and improve their intellectual endowments and accomplishments,
natural

natural and acquired, to the purposes of God's glory and the best good of mankind, doing nothing by partiality ; studying to shew themselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed ; rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to every one his portion in due season ; feeding Christ's sheep and feeding his lambs ; being pure from the blood of all men, having declared unto them the counsel of God, and kept back nothing, that might be profitable ; but taught them publickly and (as far as they had opportunity) from house to house. It will animate them with a love to their master ; a concern for his honour ; and the safety of their own, and the souls of others. It will be a means of their becoming all things to all men, in circumstantial and indifferent matters, in lesser concerns, that they may by all means save some. It will make them watch for souls, as those that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief --- Here am I, Lord, and the souls thou hast graciously given me !

Prudence, will direct them to the doing all these things, and performing all the parts of their ministry, and conducting their entire conversation, in a manner most likely to insure success ; that it may not be of themselves, they have occasion to complain " Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ?" and that the blood of the people (if there must be blood in the case) may be entirely upon their own heads. It will lead them into the happiest times of address, when they may have easiest access to the souls of their hearers ; as times of personal affliction and trouble, when the mind is serious and disposed to consideration ; times of
general

general calamity and distress. It will put them upon adapting their discourses, to the circumstances and capacities of their auditors, and so speaking a word in season and fitly ; which how beautiful and excellent is it ! like apples of gold, in pictures of silver. It will dispose them to clothe their ideas in words easy to be understood, and be many ways useful and serviceable unto them. “ The want of prudence, says one, darkens the brightest talents, and sullies the greatest abilities ; it sinks the ministerial character, and prevents an extensive usefulness.” Whereas, with a tolerable stock of discretion, what great things have lower abilities effected ?

Meekness and humility, will enable them to bear afflictions from God with a patient and christian spirit, and injuries and abuses from men (which we are given to expect) without undue and sinful resentments ; still instructing, even those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure shall give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. It will support us under the froward, ungrateful tempers and dispositions of our people ; their unjust revilings and reproaches ; unreasonable and wicked men, who have not faith. This servant of the Lord will not strive, but be patient toward all men ; let them curse, for God hath bidden them.

Courage and firmness of mind, will prepare them to stand the shock of every threatening danger ; not to magnify evils before they come ; to anticipate their sorrows and flee when none pursueth ; nor to sink and be discouraged, when they are actually lying upon us ; but rather resolve to wade thro' them ; dare to do our duty and hope and wait for a comfortable issue.

Aptness

Aptness to teach, will give them great advantages for diffusing knowledge ; improving every convenient opportunity, and doing it so as may be most likely to answer the end, in a manner intelligible and easy to be understood. The lips of such an one will feed many ; like some prudent parent, he will be often dropping something useful into his spiritual children. Every visit shall be serviceable to the end of godly edifying.

And an every way inoffensive, blameless, regular and exemplary life and conversation, will conciliate honor and esteem ; not only to their persons, but their doctrines ; and be a means to make the people regard and obey them. To use the language of a most sprightly and spirited author, "Of how great consequence is it to religion, that they who minister in holy things should be men of unblemished character ! the reason of the thing, the power of example, and the consent of all mankind, abundantly convince us. Religion should undoubtedly be practised for what it is in itself. And some there are of so noble and rational a make, that they love to consider matters in their own native light, abstracted from the sentiments of others ; and upon sufficient conviction of their reasonableness and goodness ; dare believe and practice them : But with the bulk of mankind it is quite otherwise. They know not how to admire any thing, but what comes recommended to them by their senses. Man is so formed by nature, that examples have a very great influence upon him ; whether good or bad. Dry precepts affect but little. Example touches the eye ; and thereby affects the heart. The sincere piety, the active goodness of the minister, steals upon the affections, & commands the respect of
the

the people. This gives weight to his counsels, edge to his reproofs, and efficacy to his exhortations. But the irregular life of the minister does great disservice to the interest of religion ; and has a pernicious influence upon the morals of the people. It staggers the faith of some, and confirms unbelievers in their infidelity. The instructions of such an one are baffled by his practice, and his conduct gives the lie to all his pretensions. Far would I be from insinuating (says my excellent author) that the blessing of ordinances depends upon the holiness of the person who administers them. To suppose this is the highest absurdity ; to assert it, I fear is blasphemy. The benefits of divine ordinances, are in God's own hands. They come from himself ; and are dispensed by him according to the inward disposition and qualification of them who wait for them. Yet, sure I am, no one can do much good, whom the people do not think a good man." Thus he.

And thus, these qualifications, such a temper and behaviour in ministers, have a direct and natural tendency (by the blessing of God) to the work of the Lord's prospering in their hands, to his word's runing, having free course and being glorified, among mankind. They are all of them recommended, one way or another, and some of them most frequently (as you are sensible) to ministers, for that purpose ; up and down in the bible.

Respecting ministers then, these are the things (some of them at least) the people are to pray for, as invited and exhorted thereto, here in the text. But then ; there are things likewise, of no less necessity and importance than the former, they are to pray for, respecting themselves, viz. that they may, with di-

ligence, constancy and reverence, attend the ministry of the word, as the ordinance of Christ, to save them that believe. Take care how, as well as what they hear, giving the most earnest heed, lest at any time they let them slip. Laying apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, receive with meekness, the ingrafted word, which is able to save their souls, mix it with faith and receive it not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which worketh effectually, in them that believe---concerned to be cast into the mould of it; and to have their hearts and lives framed and fashioned by it, treasuring it up in their hearts and practising it in their lives --- so being not forgetful hearers, but doers of the work, that they may be blessed in their deed. Worthy of notice, and but too little regarded, is the ninetieth answer in our assembly's catechism, to which I refer you.

Thus of the things, that have a direct and natural tendency to the word of the Lord's running, having free course and being glorified, respecting both ministers and people; which therefore, the latter are to pray for, as invited and exhorted thereto, here in the text.

However, it is not sufficient that they pray merely for those things that have a direct and natural tendency, to produce these events; and which may seem to have a positive influence into them. They are to pray too, for the prevention or removal of every thing, that would obstruct and hinder them;--- that would dam up, or divert the course of the word; give it a retrograde motion, and make it return empty into the bosom of him that administers it; or any ways retard and slacken the progress and flourishing of it: Therefore it is added, in the verse immediately

mediately following the text ; (as that, in particular, the apostle would have them employ their prayers about in this matter) “ and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, for all men have not faith ;” unreasonable and wicked men ; (more or less of whom are to be met with in most places) men destitute of faith, in the being, power and other perfections of God ; in the truth of the gospel ; and so prejudiced against it ; set to oppose it ; never contented and easy, always finding fault, contradicting and blaspheming ; bringing forward their nonsensical ill-natured objections ; picking holes, finding or rather making flaws in minister’s sermons or proceedings) such men wherever they be, very much obstruct and hinder the progress and flourishing of Christ’s kingdom and interest in the world---they stop the course of it--- thro’ them the way of truth is evil spoken of--- they draw away disciples after them--- they weaken the minister’s hands ; discourage, or rather break his heart---they hedge up his way, neither go in themselves, and those that are entering they hinder. And against these ; for the prevention or removal of these, the apostle would have the people pray, as invited and exhorted thereto here in the text.

Thus I have done with the first thing proposed from the words ---what a people are to pray for, in behalf of the ministers, as invited and exhorted thereto here in the text.--- Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. But then,

Secondly, Why are a people to pray for their ministers in these respects ? that is, in respect of the word of the Lord’s prospering, having free course, and being glorified, in the conviction and conversion of finners,

sinners, and building up of saints ; and consequently, in respect of all those things, which have any ways a tendency (by the blessing of God) to serve to and promote it ; as they have, or should have been, hinted at upon this subject.

Now, the relation of brethren they stand in one to another, calls for and requires it "brethren, pray for us." It is a relation of love. And how shall a person or people better express their love, than by humble prayer for a blessing to them, or him they love ? and what greater or more desirable blessing, to a faithful minister, than that the people are invited and exhorted to pray for, here in the text ; that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified ?

Once more. The subject matter of the petition itself carries motive and argument in it. It is " that the word of the Lord may run, have free course and be glorified " that it may spread and prevail in the world, and over the hearts and lives of men (like some pleasant stream or mighty river ; that glides sweetly along, without any obstruction, visits, washeth and refresheth different and far distant shores) proving the power of God, to their salvation. And how can a person be himself a disciple of Christ ; or friend to his fellow-men, that neglects and is indifferent about it ? Every motive invites, urgeth and presseth him in this business. Duty to Christ, his Lord and master ; his compassionate gracious favor ; a concern for his honor and interest ; love to his fellow creatures ; his fellow professors, and the world in general ; yea, and even to his own soul too, call for and require it. And, it may be hoped, a cord with so many strands, and so twisted, will not be easily broken ; but that our dear
people

people will feel and fall under the force of it; be kindly and gently allured and drawn by it.

Thus of the second thing proposed from the words. The third and last now follows.

III. What special interest, have ministers in these concerns, above christians in general, that the people should be invited, to pray for the one, rather than the other, as to this matter?

Now, as they are set, by office, for the defence of the gospel, and a dispensation of it is committed to them. As they are put in trust with the gospel; being taken from among men, and bro't near to God, to serve him in a peculiar station. As they have the cure of souls; and must watch as those that must give account; it may be presumed, that they are more concerned than most other men, as to this matter; that it lies nearer, and with more weight, and influence upon their hearts; calling up, and engaging their thoughts and attention. That they have greater anxiety and sollicitude about it than other men. Their office-relation requires it; and has a tendency to it. And indeed, he will scarcely prove a good minister of Jesus Christ; a faithful or successful under-shepherd, to the great shepherd and bishop of souls; with whom it is otherwise. He will take but little delight in his ministry; either totally neglect it; suffer any thing and every thing, to put him by from it, or go to his study and the pulpit as a bear to the stake; content himself with the least, both of the one and the other, that will any ways serve his turn, and bear his charges thro' the world. His words will die upon his lips, and be of no effect unto the hearers; unless to make them as formal, careless and stupid as himself. The

The same care and concern, for the progress and flourishing of Christ's cause, kingdom and interest in the world, that would be tolerable, if not even considerable, in an ordinary christian, will by no means answer the end, in a minister; either to his suitably discharging his office, or shewing his sincerity; this being his peculiar, his special business and employment in the world; his particular calling; in which he is to abide with God; feeding Christ's sheep; feeding his lambs; and thereby manifesting the sincerity of his love. But then, another reason is this; their having and duly improving, these qualifications; being of the temper and behavior, before mentioned (that are very much necessary, and have such a tendency to the work of the Lord's prospering in their hands; to his word's having free course, running and being glorified) contributes greatly to their happiness and felicity, in the other world. They that are thus wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. They save their own souls, in taking methods to save the souls of them that hear them. This is their particular calling. Here their business chiefly lies; and, accordingly, thereby they lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. God is not unrighteous, to forget their work and labour of love; but takes a kind and gracious notice of it; saying, "well done good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

It is true, as to a faithful minister, labouring in vain
and

and spending his strength, for nought and in vain (as to any good effect it has upon the people; the case of but too, too many in all ages of the world) tho' Israel be not gathered, yet shall he be glorious, in the eyes of the Lord, and his God shall be his strength. His judgment is with the Lord, and his work on reward with his God. Yet, permit me, to propose it as a query; whether, from the nature of the thing, successfulness itself does not contribute to and enlarge his felicity? This seems to be the most obvious and natural interpretation of that, with many other texts, 2 epistle of John 8 verse. "Look to your selves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought; but that we receive a full reward."

The souls saved, under a faithful persons ministry, are certainly his crown and joy. They shed a lustre upon him; and are as so many sparkling gems in his crown of glory. They are, if not each others, the minister's rejoicing in the day of Christ. See 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." This is the special interest ministers have, in these concerns, above christians in general; and these are the reasons, why the people are invited to pray for the one, rather than the other, as to this matter.

Thus I have done with the doctrinal illustration of the words of the text. The improvement may be, both by way of inference and address.

Learn hence, my brethren, both ministers and candidates, both elder and younger, what it is, in
special,

special; we ourselves are to pray for. Ministers of Christ! and not pray that his word may run and be glorified---his work prosper and flourish---his kingdom come and his will be done, on earth as in heaven; --- his name be magnified, when it is in and by us, as the instruments,---that he would gird his sword upon his thigh, and ride prosperously because of truth, conquering and to conquer. The thing is impossible! It is the greatest absurdity and contradiction imaginable!

Where is our concern for the honour and interest of our divine master; or the safety & happiness of the souls that he has redeemed? our own and the souls of others committed to our care? all which are connected with, and implied in, the word of the Lord having free course and being glorified. Every thing valuable; every thing that is of any importance, is contained in this single petition. It is praying for ourselves and others; yea, and for the honor and interest of Christ, all in a breath. And our bespeaking the addresses of others--"brethren, pray for us;" clearly infers our own obligation.

Ministers, of all men, should be men of prayer. It is observed by one (if my memory serves me) that prayer and temptation make a minister. And nothing, sure, a more fit subject of their addresses than this. Their very office and peculiar interest, in these concerns, loudly call for and require it. And do we pray for it! we are to endeavour it, all that ever we can. It is to be the white we aim at. We are to spend and be spent in this business. To pray for a thing; and yet not promote it; not to reach and strive after it; is acting antipodes, a contradiction to ourselves; and is a certain evidence

dence of our hypocrisy ; which God abhors. It should swallow up our whole souls. It should engross our entire concerns. Here we should stretch our selves. In this we should be engaged and in earnest (however it is in other things.) For this, we should not only pray ; but study and preach ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine ; be instant in season and out of season. We should watch, be sober, and hope to the end ; be tender of one anothers character and reputation ; strengthen each others hands, and encourage each others hearts ; and do every thing, that lies in our power, in an humble dependence upon God, who teacheth man to profit, and giveth the increase.

Hear how the apostle speaks : “ And I will very gladly spend and be spent, for you ; tho the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.” “ None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Now these things were written for our learning and for our imitation. We should go and do likewise. We should make every thing subservient, and give way to this great end ; the work of the Lord’s prospering in our hands ; his word’s running, having free course and being glorified. And wo be unto us, if we thus preach not the gospel !

Well may we say, brethren, pray for us ; pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified ; and that we may make the preaching fully known.

But my discourse turns into some short, but suit-

D

able

able addressees, to the parties especially concerned in this day's solemnity.

YOU, dear sir, (at whose desire, I stand in this desk, to perform the part of a friendly and faithful monitor, upon this great and solemn occasion) are now to be put in trust with the gospel, and to take the charge of souls, particularly the souls of this people and their offspring.

You are publickly (as we trust you have done, over and over again, more privately) devoting your self to serve God, in the gospel of his son; and taking part of this ministry.

You are to have a regular introduction into this work; of which God, angels and men are witnesses. ---And, I doubt not, but that (upon hearing the qualifications necessary, to one that would hope to answer the end of its institution; the temper and behaviour he must be of; how poorly, how imperfectly represented in this discourse!) your self-diffidence and modesty is ready to cry out, astonished --- And who is sufficient for these things! why, truly, none of us are so; neither man nor angels, without special help and assistance from above. But when we are weak, then are we strong; sensibly weak in our selves; but strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Our support and encouragement is that. "Lo I am with you always to the end of the world." He that has set us to work; that has sent us upon this embassy of peace, will bear our charges, and carry us thro', if we be but faithful to him. Remember who hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The Lord is with you while ye be with him.

We

We rejoice, my brother, to find, by an acquaintance with you and an exhibition from you, that there is so hopeful a foundation laid (in study and experience, and, as we trust, in grace and a good conversation) for future usefulness. And that (with such satisfaction to our selves, as well as this people) we can now separate you, for the work to which you are called. May we never be ashamed of our hope ! let no man stop us, of this boasting, in any region of the world.

Go on then, dear sir, as you have already begun. Give attendance to reading, no less than exhortation and doctrine; neglect not the gift that is in thee; meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all. Take heed to thy self, and to thy doctrine ; continue in them. Your gifts shall brighten and increase by improvement, and to him that hath, shall be given. What is difficult at first, will become more and more natural and easy by use.

Let all your capacities and acquirements be under the governing influence of faithfulness. Endeavour, to consecrate them all to the glory of God and good of souls. Let this be all your ambition. Seek not honour from men, but praise from God. Let them be directed by prudence---discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.---Too many encomiums can scarcely be bestowed, upon this virtue, in our present situation.---Let them be tempered with meekness and humility---supported with courage and fortitude ---assisted with aptness to teach, and attended and seconded by a good conversation. And be much in humble prayer, to him who teacheth us to profit ;---who hath the residue of the spirit

spirit---ministreth seed to the sower, and multiplieth our seed sown. And withal bespeak the prayers of your people. --- Let them know, that you desire and expect their fervent prayers for you.

So shall you prosper. He that has begun a good work in you will carry it on to the day of the Lord Jesus---and when the great Shepherd of the sheep shall appear; you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

To the Church of Christ then, and people of God in this place.

CEASE not to pray for your minister --- pray for him, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even among you---Let him be always near your hearts, whenever you repair to the throne of grace, to ask mercy for your selves. Shall I say he is young and needs it? the work is difficult and dangerous and calls for it?---But this I say: Your relation of brethren obligeth you to it---The thing itself, you are invited to pray for, contains abundant motive and argument in it. It is, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, --- that you and others may convert and be healed. Christ's honour, (your Lord and master, your gracious saviour) the safety, comfort, and happiness of your own, and others souls, and the good of the world, are involved in it; they are dependent upon it. Your pastor has by office a special concern in the thing. And his eternal advantage is thereby served and promoted: So that, if you have any love and regard to him, upon any account; (either his personal endowments or sacred employment

ment) pray for him as to this matter. Use all the interest you have at the throne of grace, that the pleasure of the Lord may prosper in his hands; that he may not run in vain, neither labour in vain; but that God's word, in his mouth, may have free course and be glorified, glide sweetly and swiftly along, to yours and others spiritual refreshment and growth in grace.

Were you, but to ask his prayers, and he to refuse it, how would you be offended? and justly too. Why, a much greater authority, demands your prayers for him. And wo be unto you, if ye neglect it!

It is to be feared, the people of our charge are but too, too little, in their humble and fervent addresses for us. --- They may be more, perhaps, in their reflections upon and complaints of us, before men, than in their prayers for us before God. I speak not these things to shame you, but as my beloved brethren, I warn you. To me indeed it may be grievous, but for you it is safe. --- You will bear it better from me, than from your own minister, who knows it to be so, and the rather, because he knows it to be so.

However this is not all. With your prayers, you must join your endeavours. They will be but a profane mockery, not to say blasphemy, without it. Be at peace, among your selves. Let nothing be done thro' strife. Compose differences, when you see them arise. Trouble not your minister with them; unless it be absolutely necessary. Respect his person, and stand up for his character and reputation; put by every thrust that is made at them; wipe off every aspersion that is cast upon them, by the tongue of malevolence

malevolence. Receive not an accusation against an elder, this elder, under two or three witnesses.

Render his life comfortable and easy. Administer to him freely ; according to your ability, and his necessity. Raise him above want. Let him be with you without fear. Attend his ministry diligently. Receive his reproofs with meekness and a christian spirit ; and be concerned to profit. Hear the law from his mouth, and receive the love of the truth. Let him see you, his spiritual children, walk in truth. Join with him, in any proposals to do good. Strengthen his hands and encourage his heart. Let him be your rejoicing now, the direct way to your being his in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And now, the Lord bless you, and keep you ! both you and your pastor ! the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you ; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace ; the blessing of the Lord be upon you. We bless you out of the house of the Lord. The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, thro' the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, thro' Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever.

7 AP 64
A M E N.

ERRATA. Page 8, line 10 from the bottom, for *turning* read *tearing*. Other errors in spelling, pointing, &c. it is desired, may be excused.